

though even then he must not expect that his avenues will display the dignity of ages afforded by the Oak,—that truly patrician tree, which testifies so independently to the antiquity of the property which it may adorn. Nobility has been, acutely enough, defined to be “ancient riches;” and assuredly one of the most convincing outward signs of “ancient riches” is *ancient timber*; as proud a badge of distinction to its proprietors as any that can be afforded by blazoned shields or storied urns, and a more desirable one, as allowing others to participate in the enjoyment of it, and inspiring only ideas of tranquillity and usefulness.

Of all the numerous tribe of Pine, or Fir trees, the *Pinus Sylvestris*, or real Scotch Fir, is the most to be prized for the value of its timber: when it arrives at a full age, its wood resembles the laburnum in colour, and is nearly as hard. The Fir in Dunmore Wood, Stirlingshire, the property of the Earl of Dunmore, perhaps the largest in the Lowlands of Scotland, is fully as remarkable for its beauty as for its magnitude; affording a very pleasing specimen of the characteristic form of its species. It is sixty-seven feet in height; eleven feet three inches in girth at the ground, and ten feet three inches at seventeen feet from it. The quantity of solid timber which it contains is two hundred and sixty-one feet, leaving out of the measurement all branches below six inches in diameter: its age is not known, though that of the Fir in general may be ascertained by the grain of the wood, which appears distinctly in circles, annually formed from the centre to the fork. “Upon cutting a tree close to the root,” says Mr. Farquarson, of Marlee, in a letter to Dr. Hunter of York, “I can venture to point out the exact age, which in these old Firs comes to an amazing number of years. I lately pitched upon a tree of two feet and a half diameter, which is near the size of a planted Fir of fifty years of age; and I counted exactly two hundred and fourteen circles or coats, which makes this natural Fir above four times the age of the planted one.”

PLATE VIII.—THE ASH AT CARNOCK.

This beautifully luxuriant tree,—

“—far spreading his umbrageous arm,”

almost embraces the venerable mansion near which it stands. It is the property of Michael Stewart Nicholson, Esq., and is supposed to be the largest in Scotland, even when measured at the smallest part of the trunk. Its dimensions in July 1825, at the time that the drawing of it was taken, were as follows:—ninety feet in height; thirty-one feet in circumference at the ground; nineteen feet three inches, at five feet from the ground; and twenty-one feet six inches, at four feet higher up. At ten feet from the ground it divides into three large branches, each of which is ten feet in circumference. It was planted about the year 1596, by Sir Thomas Nicholson of Carnock, in Stirlingshire, Lord Advocate of Scotland in the reign of James VI. It is at the present period in full vigour and beauty, combining airy grace in the lightness of its foliage and the playful ramifications of its smaller branches, with solidity and strength in its silvery stem and principal arms. Delightful indeed is it to contemplate the variety and surpassing beauty of many of these “houses not built with hands,” proclaiming to the viewless winds, the eyes of heaven, and the heart of man, the wisdom and the love of the Eternal Architect, whose fiat calls them into existence, and whose benevolence wills them to live for ages. Nor is it without regret that the Author sees himself arrived at the end of a task so congenial to his feelings, as that of commemorating some of those silent but happy “inheritors of the earth,” to which the shorter-lived inhabitants of it owe so much both of profit and enjoyment. Nevertheless, he rejoices in the opportunity his work has afforded him, of consecrating to his native country a trophy illustrative of her woodland treasures, her pride, her ornament and defence; a trophy, which he would fain offer up to her as expressive of his ardent wishes for the continuance of her prosperity and happiness, and that they may endure and flourish, for ages to come, in the full spirit of the Scriptural blessing,—

“As the days of a tree are the days of my people.”

FINIS.

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